## In the Claims:

Please amend original claims 1-4 and add new claim 5 as follows:

- Claim 1 (currently amended) A process Process for the production of nitric acid with a concentration of 50 to 76% from ammonia and oxygen-bearing gas under pressure, using the mono or dual pressure process, characterised in that wherein
  - the expansion of the tail gas takes place in at least two steps, thereby converting the gas to energy,
  - the said configuration provides for a device arranged between each pair of expansion units and intended for heating the expanded tail gas to a temperature of >450°C, the said system exploiting the waste heat from the nitric acid production process.
- Claim 2 (currently amended) The process Process according to claim No. 1,

  characterised in that the invention provides for comprising a gas inlet temperature of 500 to 600°C, preferably 535°C for the expansion steps, thereby supplying drive energy to further consumers.
- Claim 3 (currently amended) The process Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterised in that it is intended to use claim 1, wherein the surplus drive energy is provided to for a generator in order to produce electric power.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The process Process according to claim 3,

characterised in that wherein a motor-generator set is used as the output of said machine is sufficient to ensure the compression drive at the plant startup.

Claim 5 (new) The process according to claim 2, wherein the gas inlet temperature is 535°C for the expansion steps.